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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001374

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: TAYLOR ARRIVES

REF: (A) ABUJA 1367

(B) MONROVIA 928

Classified by Charge Dawn Liberi. Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Former President Charles Taylor arrived in Abuja Monday evening August 11 at 2125 local time. He traveled with President Kufuor of Ghana and President Chissano of Mozambique, and was greeted by President Obasanjo. After spending several hours in Abuja, he and his entire contingent continued to Calabar in Rivers State, arriving there at 0300 hours Tuesday, August 12. Long-time Liberia hand, MFA Permanent Secretary Dan Hart told A/DCM that Taylor looked

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forlorn and mentally deflated on his arrival in Abuja. All Taylor could do was hang his head and refuse to talk.

2. (U) Taylor, along with his family, aides, and their families, will be staying in a series of State Government guest lodges in a government-reserved area known as Diamond Hill. His mansion overlooks the Calabar River and has a view of the ocean. More than 60 family members and aides have already arrived in Calabar.

3. (C) Taylor and company are expected to stay in Calabar for approximately three months during which time his movements are to be extremely restricted. A senior GON source has confirmed that Taylor will not be placed under house arrest, but will not be allowed to travel outside of Diamond Hill for the near future. Over the next three months, the GON plans to see if Taylor and his entourage behave themselves, and how Nigerians react to their presence. Then they will determine whether to allow Taylor to expand his movements within Nigeria. There is currently no restriction on the visitors that Taylor can receive.

4. (C) A set of conditions for Taylor remaining in Nigeria are being determined. It is anticipated that he and President Obasanjo will come to final agreement on these conditions by the end of the week. A key condition will be total noninvolvement in Nigerian political issues, and more importantly a complete cut-off from Liberia's political affairs as well.

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

5. (C) COMMENT: Getting Taylor to agree and (most importantly) adhere to the conditions of good behavior will top Obasanjo's priority list. Given the domestic opposition to his Liberia policy, Obasanjo cannot afford vintage bad behavior from Taylor. Taylor will find it difficult to shy away from mischief. Obasanjo still holds the hammer of deportation to Sierra Leone and that threat should restrain Taylor in the short to medium term.

6. (C) The bucolic setting of Calabar will not charm Taylor for long and he will be itching to go somewhere else for a time. Thus, Taylor's stay here must be monitored closely as it has the potential to become a problem. But that lies in future. For now, Obasanjo and others have pushed the Liberian peace process forward by removing the worst card in a bad deck from the game. A high-level telephone call from Washington to Obasanjo commending this achievement might be in order. For his part, Taylor has no love for Nigeria and cannot envision calling it his permanent home. Meanwhile, Nigeria is now host to three former Liberian leaders. End Comment.

